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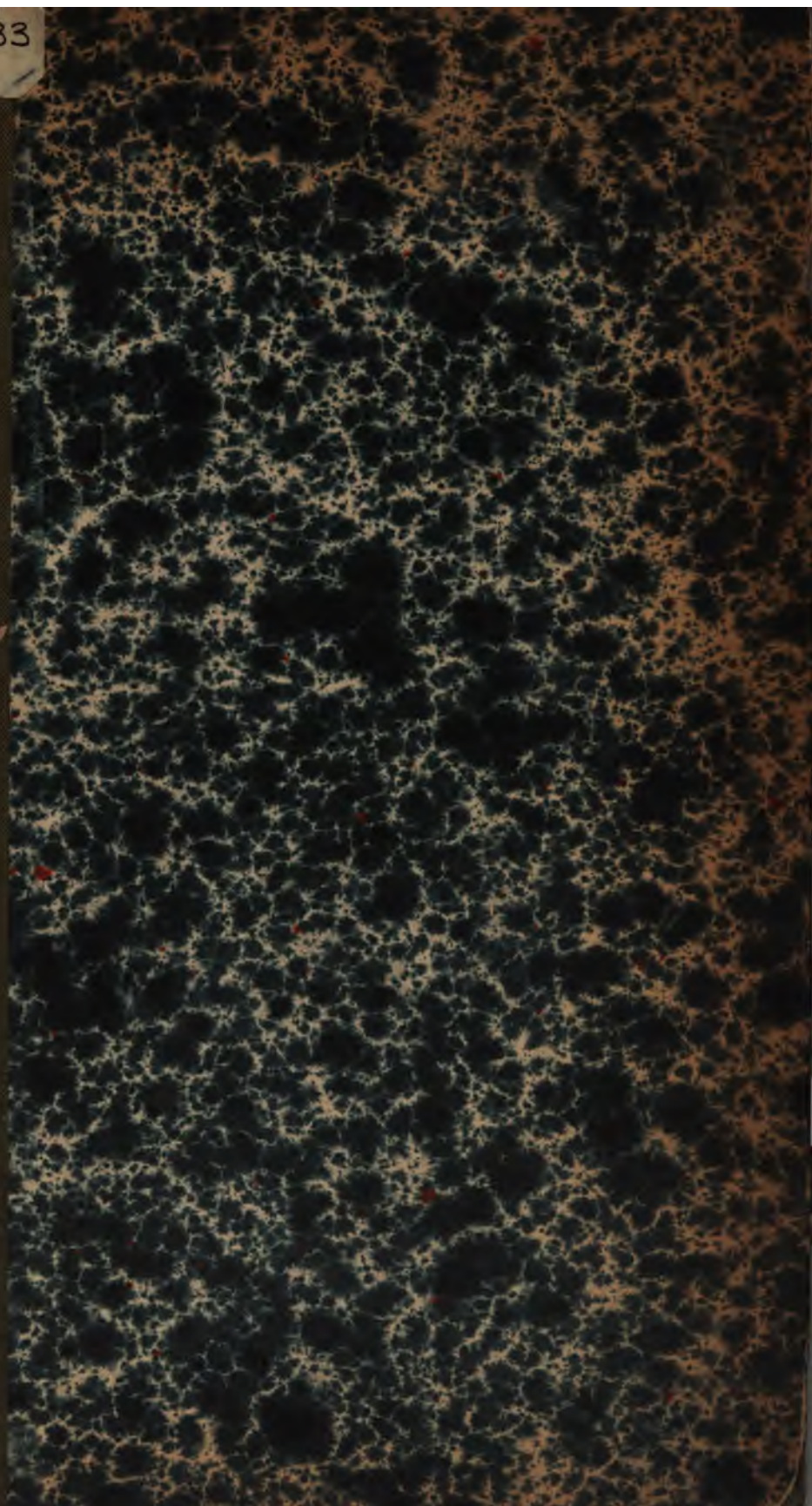
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The Great Revealer.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

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AS

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THE GREAT REVEALER.

"THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST."—2 Cor. 4: 6.

To the Scriptures are we indebted for all our practical knowledge of the being, and for all just conceptions respecting the perfections of the one, supreme God. For although his eternal power and Godhead may be so clearly understood by the things that are made, as to leave the atheistical rejector without excuse; yet we do know that, as a matter of fact, all men, of all places, in all ages, when deprived of the light of revelation, have overlooked these unquestionable traces of Deity, and have sunk into the abyss of polytheism and idolatry. With unanimous consent they have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts and creeping things." The Bible, like the telescope, concentrates the scattered rays of Divinity which would otherwise escape our notice, and gives us the only true and perfect image of the Infinite One.

From the same source also do we derive any satisfactory notion concerning the origin of the material universe. It is impossible for the intelligent mind to look abroad upon the heavens, to survey this earth, to examine the varied forms of existence, animate and inanimate, with which both earth and sky are filled, and not ask, Whence came all these things? When, and from what cause did they spring forth; and how have they acquired their present modes of being? Accordingly, the sagacity of men has in all ages been tasked to its utmost at this point. Various schemes of the cosmogony, more or less ingenious and plausible, have been devised to remove the difficulties that surround the subject, and to silence, if not to satisfy, the curious

inquirer. Hence we hear of the eternity of inert matter ; the eternal succession of the generations of men, each individual of whom, however, was finite ; the creation of all things, and the reduction of the formless mass into well-defined shapes and proportions by chance, which is but a name for our ignorance of an intelligent Cause ;—and hence, too, we are told that the wonderful adaptation of the several classes of beings to subserve obvious and important uses, arises out of the fortuitous concurrence of atoms. These are prominent suggestions among the thoughts of the wise on this subject which are vain. They relieve no obscurity ; they satisfy no doubt ; they give us no clue through this labyrinth ; they do not really tell us when and why the beautiful “creation sprang exulting in its light and harmony from the dark bosom of the void abyss.”—But when we open the Bible, all is plain. At the very first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, the mystery is cleared up by the simple utterance, “In the beginning, **GOD CREATED.**” And elsewhere we are told, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” “By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.” An almighty and intelligent Cause appears, and his works praise him. He summoned matter into being, when as yet there was none of it. His Spirit brooded over the chaotic mass to give it life. He impressed upon the orbs that float through space their form and place and motion. He peopled earth and air with the countless tribes that dwell therein. All creation is the product of his simple fiat. “He spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

On another momentous topic, intimately connected with this, our resort must be the same. The Scriptures alone tell us with what intent, to secure what grand end, all things were made and are kept in being. The investigations of science disclose to us a thousand subordinate uses of beauty or utility to man or to the inferior creation, subserved by the various processes we behold. And when the philosophic mind has generalized to the extent of its capacity, it is very apt to conclude that it has reached the ultimate fact, the final cause of all things, and to rest satisfied that in some material result, or at the most some end by which the intellect of man is gratified and his nature aggrandized, it has laid open the great secret why all things exist as they are ; it has discovered the true end for which they were originally made. The pride of the natural heart seems to render us incapable of imagining any nobler object of the vast universe, or of any part of it, than one which has relation chiefly to man's interests and man's enjoyment. Man, the creature, is the centre and the circumference of all existence.—But how different and how much more dignified the view the Bible gives

us of this subject. It tells us that "the Lord hath made all things for himself." He himself, and not his creatures, is the grand end of his works. To give scope and exercise to his intelligent and active nature, he essayed the task of creation. We may suppose a sort of necessity that the Divine Being should make some objective manifestation, such as the universe presents; and then his great idea would be to depict himself, so to speak, in sensible forms to the conception of his creatures. Each department of his works would be an exhibition of some grand characteristic of his nature; and the combined whole would set him forth, "full-orbed, in the bright round of rays complete." That God should glorify himself by demonstrating his being, and illustrating his adorable perfections, that is an object worthy of his infinite power and skill; that is the highest and best end we can imagine in the creation and sustentation of all things.

This end, the Scriptures teach us, is pre-eminently subserved in the work of redemption. Some of the Divine attributes, partially represented in the material system, are more fully developed in the mediation by Jesus Christ. Hence the superiority of the latter over the former is seen, even where they come into direct comparison. But there are other, more exalted and endearing qualities, which, but for some such device as that revealed in the gospel, could never, so far as we can perceive, have had any manifestation whatever. There would have appeared for them neither occasion nor object. The character of God would have wanted its full illustration. And, however much we might have admired his natural attributes in creation, those higher excellences of a moral kind by which love is excited and duty prompted, would have been but faintly, if at all, revealed. In the gospel these are brought out into bold relief. And they are so enforced, that angels turn from other contemplations to look into this "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." If in creation, God appears majestic; in grace, transcendent. "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is "the glory that excelleth."

By the phrase "the glory of God," I think the apostle would evidently have us to understand, the most resplendent and impressive display of his nature God can give; or at least that our finite powers can receive. It is such a presentation of Divine excellence as fills both mind and heart; as leads our rapt spirits to wonder and adore. Now this is made to us, and, for aught we know, to all ranks of intelligent creatures, angels on high and devils in hell, as well as man upon the earth, "in the face of Jesus Christ." Doubtless we are to interpret this of the Redeemer's person and acts as the Mediator of the New Covenant. To qualify him for that office, he who originally was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,

took on him our nature, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He lived a life of great humiliation and sorrow, but of entire obedience to the Divine commands, and thus wrought out a righteousness fully equal to the demands of the law. He taught the will of God more perfectly than it had ever been taught before ; wrought miracles in confirmation of his Divine commission and doctrine ; and finally, by a death of expiation on the cross, made full atonement for the sins of those for whom he suffered. All this was voluntary on his part, yet by the appointment of the Father ; and now, in virtue of his merit, God can freely pardon and save those who, though hell-deserving, rely by faith on this one, all-sufficient sacrifice in their behalf. God can now be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. This system, sometimes, with expressive brevity, styled "the doctrine of the cross," "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," is comprised in the person and work of Christ ; and it is God's crowning achievement. When Moses descended from the terrible mount at the giving of the law, his face did shine with so divine a lustre, that the children of Israel could not steadily look upon it ; it seemed to shadow forth the glory of Jehovah in that dispensation. But more luminously did his glorious attributes shine forth through the New Testament economy, in the face of Jesus Christ ; a more exalted Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises.

Let us then give our attention to this theme, and endeavor to realize the beauty and force of the apostle's idea.

I. We observe, that the provision of Christ as Mediator pre-eminently displays the GOODNESS of God. Goodness is a general name for all those kind, condescending, compassionate qualities of Deity, which are variously displayed in his providence towards our race, and are expressed by terms diversified mainly by the occasion or objects of their manifestation. It is bounty, as it leads him to create or to provide for the safety and enjoyment of intelligent beings. It is love, benevolence, as it prompts him to delight in and rejoice over them. It is grace when he does good to the undeserving ; compassion, mercy, when he succors both the unworthy and miserable ; patience, long-suffering, when he forbears with those who provoke and insult his majesty and requite evil for his good. Now it must be apparent, that those exercises which are characterized as grace, mercy, compassion, patience, long-suffering, are a much higher display of the general affection of goodness, than those which pass under the distinctive names of bounty, or benevolence. The latter may be but the outflowing of a mild and generous nature ; the former is apt to be contrary to every natural prompting of the heart. The one may arise without any forethought, as a mere instinctive act of mind seeking the gratification which kindness towards those we approve imparts to ourselves ; the

other springs from reflection, and often from great self-control. It is a magnanimous movement to succor the misery of those whose vices excite our moral disapprobation, or whose acts of personal wrong have injured our honor and inflamed our resentments. There may be nothing in the one case beyond the indulgence of a natural amiability; the other is the result of thought, moral judgment, and a virtuous self-constraint, and fairly brings out the heart's noblest affections, and reveals the loftiest traits of character. Such is our view of this matter in relation to men. We never falter in regard to it. Our minds at once instinctively make the discrimination, and our moral sense cannot but approve it. And if any other rule applies to the Divine Being in the exercise of his goodness, we cannot know it, we have no faculties to comprehend it. Compassion, grace, mercy, rather than mere bounty or benevolence, is the pre-eminent glory of God's goodness. Now it is precisely this exercise of this Divine attribute which appears "in the face of Jesus Christ." For the objects of his intervention were not simply creatures susceptible of enjoyment, towards whom benignity might be extended; nor even innocent sufferers whose unmerited woes would appeal with resistless eloquence to a sympathizing heart. Ah, no! How different the representation which the whole Bible makes of this point, and which all experience and the observation of all times and places serve rigidly to confirm. They were sinners; an apostate race; rebellious and depraved; who had cast off the fear of Jehovah; had been most ungrateful under accumulated loads of benefits; a seed of iniquity, and justly exposed to the penalty foretold to the violators of the holy law. They were wretched and miserable, helpless and hopeless in themselves, and without any refuge or known relief. God, the offended Sovereign, might, without any impeachment of his character, have left them to the ruin their sin had caused, and the adoring universe would have exclaimed, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when thou judgest and condemnest!" Moreover, the benefits he came to bestow were not common bounties to embellish or elevate their outward condition during a brief sojourn on earth; but blessings that reach the wants of the ruined soul, and compass the duration of its immortal existence. That God should spare them on the earth, that he should continue to feed and clothe and sustain them, presents truly a rare instance of his goodness. But how much more glorious does this attribute appear, when he so pities, that he conceives the idea of salvation from the curse their sin deserved; provides the method in the mediatorial life and death of his own Son; sends him to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself; and at length gives him to the cross for those who were not only vile and rebellious, but who through four thousand years, from generation to generation, had showed the

virulence of their corruption by a course of progressive transgression. He saw what they did not see : that their sin took hold on hell. He felt what they did not feel : desire for their recovery. He stooped to do what they could not do : to provide a ransom, and open a passage from the gloom of perdition to the security and delights of heaven. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his Son to die for us." The source, the objects, and the final end of this grace, prove it to be the chief effort of Divine goodness. Yet let it be observed, that any view of human depravity which does away with the necessity of a true atonement for sin ; any scheme of belief which makes Christ's interposition less than mercy for the lost, though it may be put forth under the pretense of honoring God, whom, it may be alleged, our doctrine on this subject represents as cruel and vindictive ; any such theory really lessens the grandeur of this transaction as an exhibition of God's perfections. It substitutes for mercy, the highest exercise of goodness, the lower indulgence of mere good-will, or bounty ; and instead of enhancing the honor of Jehovah, dims the lustre of his ineffable glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

II. The glory of Divine HOLINESS appears most conspicuously in the mediation by Jesus Christ. This perfection may be defined, that essential quality of the Divine Nature which consists in entire freedom from all pollution and hatred of it, and in a perfect love of every thing that is pure, and true, and right, and good. It has been well styled the sum of the divine attributes, the perfection of all perfections. It restrains each within its proper sphere, and guides and controls the whole. Without it mercy would be weak good-nature, and justice would degenerate into remorseless severity. Without it we could have no assurance that the Deity would remain a gracious Father or a righteous Sovereign. That it is essential, therefore, to all proper ideas of God, none can doubt. That the Divine Being himself so regards it, is apparent from the declaration that he is "of jealous holiness, and cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence." When he would add emphasis and solemnity to his promises or threatenings, he is said to "swear by his holiness." The ascription which angels regard as most honorable, and which they offer before the throne with ceaseless fervor, is "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"

God manifested this attribute in his creating work, in that every creature capable of holiness he formed perfect in it ; and as all things else were good, each in its kind, so man was made upright, bearing God's moral image, consisting in true holiness, which is the chief excellence of our nature. In providence he marked his love of holiness by giving to rational creatures a law enforced by the most rigid sanctions, requiring spotless purity of heart and life. And along the page

of history he has, from time to time, reared impressive monuments of this same disposition. He hurled from heaven the angels who kept not their first estate, but sinned, and reserves them in chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. He deluged the old world with a flood of water; and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from the Lord out of heaven. When the iniquity of the Amorites was full, he visited them with his wrath. He overthrew Jerusalem and scattered the Jews, his covenant people, over the face of the earth. And in instances numerous and conspicuous of his judgments upon incorrigible offenders, both individuals and nations, from age to age, has he vindicated his perfect purity. The elements of nature and the fierce passions of man have been made subservient ministers of his will. No age, no nation, scarce a spot of the peopled earth that has not beheld some signal display of his hatred of sin and his determination to punish it. The very globe is scarred with the lightnings of his anger; and as if to mark the sad truth that all are perverted and obnoxious to punishment, not giants of iniquity only are selected from the mass, but whole communities—the sportive child and the prattling babe, the infant of days with the man of hoary hairs—are alike involved in his terrible judgments. Nor can any satisfactory reason be given for this, but that we are a race of sinners and therefore we suffer. These visitations are unmistakable proofs that the Divine Being loves righteousness and hates iniquity; that he is absolutely just and holy in his character. But mark now the illustrations of the same attribute “in the face of Jesus Christ.” In the person of this Mediator it is exhibited in the choice of one to make atonement who was without stain of natural corruption; and who, though appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, and passing life amidst infinite temptations, was yet upheld and made an incomparably glorious pattern of perfect holiness in heart and life. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and has left an example of the possibility and excellence of true and untarnished purity even in one of our race, to the entire vindication of God’s holy law and the upholding of virtue among men. Again, in the work of the Mediator, Divine holiness is seen in still requiring of this victim, though in himself innocent, when he consents to stand in the place of sinners, that he should exhaust the curse which they deserved, wrath to the uttermost. The justice of Jehovah could require, could accept no less than the penalty due to sin. It was appeased in the voluntary sacrifice of this Mediator Jesus, this days-man who gave himself a ransom for many, and thus satisfied the law and made it honorable. Why must he suffer? Because so the threatening required. But why could not the woe be remitted at the mere good-pleasure of God, or upon the mere repentance of the transgressor? Because then Divine

veracity would have been impeached in the disregard of a positive threatening; because then no deeply moving lesson of the exceeding evil of sin, no grand moral influence to humble, to restrain, to regenerate and purify, such as now proceeds from the cross of Christ, could have been exhibited to the awed universe of moral beings; because the truth, the justice, the holiness of God, and the ends of moral government sternly forbade. More impressive was that spectacle, more eloquent its teachings of the nature of the Divine government, of the inviolability of law, and the immaculate purity of the Deity, than any other exhibition that ever had been or ever could be made. That "God spared not his own Son, but gave him up to die for sinners," gives me a new view of his infinite holiness that fills me with amazement and awe. Would he have adopted such peculiar methods, would he have required so costly a sacrifice, if sin had been a trivial evil in his empire, or if holiness had not demanded a most signal vindication? When I behold in the person and work of my Redeemer the glory of the Divine holiness, which, rather than sin should go unpunished, lays on him the iniquity of us all, deeply is my soul humbled before God. I shrink in my loathsomeness from the eye of omniscient purity, and exclaim with overwhelming emotion, Unclean, unclean! Not so subduing to the Israelites were the thunders and lightnings of the terrible mount, as to the convinced sinner is the spectacle of the one offering on Cavalry, in which he beholds in strange conjunction, the goodness, the justice, the holiness of God.

III. WISDOM is a glorious perfection of Deity; and it shines resplendent "in the face of Jesus Christ." It is the right application of knowledge to secure desirable or necessary ends. Sometimes it appears in simply seizing favorable junctures, or turning common incidents as they arise to our purpose; sometimes in prudently avoiding difficulties; sometimes in the more admirable art of harmonizing opposite extremes and of converting apparently adverse circumstances into the instruments and means of our success. In each of these ways does the wisdom of Deity appear in most perfect development, in the mediation by Christ. We may conceive—for the subject is thus graphically set forth in Scripture—we may conceive the Divine Being inquiring and meditating what he would do on man's revolt. Angels had rebelled and had been given over to hopeless destruction. Yet this had not arrested the course of sin. For now, under temptation it is true, man had transgressed and fallen from his high estate. Must then another race be consigned to remediless woe? Must the great God appear to be foiled by his own creation, in his work? Mercy cries, Spare, oh! spare! But how? How can I spare and be a Sovereign, and retain dominion over mind and will? Mercy suggests

a ransom. Let "some other able and as willing pay the rigid satisfaction, death for death." But "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The great problem was to find a substitute who could stand for the guilty, being himself without stain; who should possess such a character that in the estimation of the intelligent universe, the law, by his death in place of the sinner, should not be evaded but magnified; the threatening not be annulled, but honored. In the person of the Son of God this problem is solved. We behold one free from all native and contracted guilt, who, by a wonderful constitution, uniting in himself the Divine and human nature, could perfectly sympathize with each of the parties between whom he was to mediate; while the same fact qualified him to honor the law by the dignity of his person, and to satisfy its claims by suffering its penalty.

In like manner, we notice wonderful contrasts in the work to be performed. There is displayed the greatest hatred of sin and the greatest love to sinners. Infinite compassion executes infinite wrath. The ignominy and death of Christ procure honor, life and happiness, to those for whom he suffered. The aggravated guilt of man's contempt of the Mediator becomes the means of finishing transgression, and will at length destroy the usurped rule of Satan as the God of this world. "Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." Conflicting attributes are not only harmonized, but it is seen that their combined force more signally and effectually secures the final consummation.

So, also, we might very profitably trace the wisdom of God in leaving so large a part of the world to human devices for 4000 years, thus proving beyond a cavil the weakness of man and the necessity of a Divine revelation; in the previous arrangements, under the ancient economy, for bringing about the advent of Messiah at the fitting juncture; in the condition of the world at the time of its occurrence; the people among whom it took place; the care with which all the singular facts of revelation were attested for the benefit of future ages; and in the choice of opportunities and instruments for its promulgation, by which Divine agency becomes more apparent and incontrovertible. Since the whole transaction was designed to produce a great moral effect upon men, it was so arranged in all its parts as to address itself most powerfully to their understandings and sympathies, their wants and desires, their hopes and fears through the whole range of their being. We see Divine wisdom selecting its field and addressing itself to its noblest work; not simply to create, but new-create; not to subdue chaotic matter, but rebellious mind; not only to vindicate, but to magnify the law; not merely to replace man in the position from which he fell, but to raise him to dignity and

felicity far higher than he had lost; to convert the rebel to a child—the heir of pollution unto angelic purity; to foil the adversary in the very moment of anticipated triumph; to add new strength to heaven's massive throne, and new lustre to the crown of heaven's King. All this is done in the cross of Christ. No subject that can engage the thoughts of men or angels displays such consummate wisdom as this; so perfect a conception of the end desired, and knowledge and skill in the choice and adjustment of means. Nor can we doubt that the final issue shall be the theme of lofty praise to holy beings while eternity shall last. It will not be the wonders of the material frame, though worlds and systems that the best instruments of science cannot now descry will then be revealed to their gaze; it will not be the gorgeousness of that New Jerusalem, whose walls garnished with all manner of precious stones, and streets of pure gold, the beloved John so glowingly describes, that will chiefly occupy their powers. Redemption's story, we are told, is still their highest wonder. It is to Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, their ecstasies of love go out. On a higher eminence than we now occupy, commanding a wider survey, and presenting ever varying points of vision; with capacities beyond thought enlarged, and with no solicitations of sense and temptations of Satan to divert or disturb their calm meditations, their knowledge will grow as the days of heaven roll on. And still, upon each fresh discovery of the resources of Divine wisdom manifested in the face of Jesus Christ, their rapt spirits will render the adoring anthem: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

IV. In further illustration of our subject we are naturally led to speak of the testimony the mediation of Christ gives to the **POWER** and **SOVEREIGNTY** of God. This appears in enlisting all agencies needful to the work in a full co-operation; in bearing down all obstacles; in removing hindrances, and in securing that there should be no false movement, so to speak, no antagonist able to disconcert his plans, or defeat the predetermined end. In general our minds are more likely, I know, to be impressed with the idea of power, from the observed operations of physical causes upon matter, than from any more recondite influences which spirit may exert over spirit, or even spirit over matter. The appeal in the one case is more immediately to our senses than in the other; and as creatures of sensation we more readily appreciate it. Hence, undoubtedly, one reason for Christ's miracles—direct appeals to the senses of men; so that the proofs of Divine Revelation might be so various as to leave no part of our nature unaddressed, and we might have all the advantage of this accumulated evidence to confirm our faith.

Yet it by no means follows that such results are the highest exercise of power. Its seat, its source is still the thinking mind, the sympathetic heart. And the witchery of a tone, a word, an act, a look ; the influence of the soul beaming through the countenance, thrilling in the voice, is often more really grand and potential than any application of brute force by which a change of matter is wrought. Immediately or remotely, spirit is the only real, energetic power in the universe. In the beginning, all lay dark and formless and inert, until the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and from the void abyss uprose the beautiful creation. Man was but a clod of earth, until the Spirit breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Now, spiritual power God pre-eminently displays in redemption. To accomplish the fulfilment of his promise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" to bring about his purpose in the birth and death of Christ, demanded infinite power as well as consummate knowledge. Over the minds of how many different agents, and through how long a period of time did this influence extend ; how effective was it in shaping and controlling the volitions and designs of these unnumbered instruments, so that, without impairing his freedom in the least degree, each one was made unconsciously to do whatsoever God's "hand and his counsel determined before to be done." What control, in like manner, over the actors in the final tragedy ! What a literal fulfilling of minute and obscure predictions, by both Jews and Roman soldiers, when yet "they thought not so, neither was it in their hearts;" but they simply and freely acted out their own wicked inclinations. How did he make "the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder he restrained !" What less than Omnipotence could have raised Christ from the dead—the first fruits of that inconceivably glorious resurrection of all the dead, and their appearance in life and immortal vigor before the throne of God ? And what less than a Divine power gives a converting agency to the simple utterance of the truth as it is in Jesus ? After many means have been tried, and have failed ; where the light of conviction has been long resisted, and indulgence in sensuality and worldliness seems to have closed every avenue to the mind, and so hardened the heart that all would say the case is hopeless, the man never will feel or yield—I say, in these cases of apparently conscience-seared transgressors, what is it that often startles them from their delusions, sets sin in array before their eyes, weighs down the soul with the terrors of the world to come, and makes it realize that none is beyond the grasp of Almighty power, that no sinner can be assured God has not ways of reaching him, or feel that he may sin on with immunity from present woe and future wrath ? And what is it, that of such daring rebels often forms "the sons and daughters of the

Lord Almighty ;” what, but the mighty power of God applying this doctrine of Christ, and working effectually to renew and to save ?

The diffusive influence of the gospel presents another view of God’s glorious power in the face of Jesus Christ. It is destined finally to overspread the world ; to subvert and root out every other religion, and to banish all those rites which are adverse to God’s honor and man’s happiness ; to make the earth again, in piety to God and in integrity to man, what it was before the building of Babel—of one lip and of one speech. But what ages and what agencies seem requisite to such a consummation. Unbelief exclaims, “If the Lord should open windows in heaven, this thing might be.” Infinite power, we know, by a word, in a moment, might accomplish it. But that has not been God’s method of procedure, and otherwise, how dreary the prospect. But antagonism, the conflict of light and darkness, and the gradual dispersion of the latter by the silent, steady diffusion of the former, has ever been his method in his spiritual kingdom. And so will it be now. Of old the truth was circumscribed within the narrow boundaries of Judea, and but dimly revealed in types and shadows even there. But at the advent of Messiah, light broke forth upon the world. The wise men, attracted by a new star, inquire, “Where is he that is born king of the Jews ?” With better wisdom and a deeper fervor, they might have asked, Who is he ? What his character and the design of his coming ? What grand results to man, to God ; to heaven, to earth ; in time, and through eternity, are shadowed by this strange epiphany ? From that moment began the work of demolition and a new erection. The vast fabric of superstition and misery, which, for ages, Satan had been building up, began even then to dissolve. And although, like some icy temple, it may, at times, assume more gorgeous hues, and glow with more resplendent beauty as it melts away, yet will it certainly and utterly vanish under the free air of heaven and the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness. And in its place will succeed a more glorious vision ; a scene more transporting shall burst upon the eye of faith ;—“the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” What a condition of human things shall exist when this conquest of the Lamb is achieved ! Over this entire earth the light of truth shall be displayed, and the influences of purity shall prevail. The victory shall be given to the saints of the Most High God, and they shall go up and possess the land in the length and the breadth of it. Nor is this all ; nor is the blessing for this world alone. No ! No ! We shall be raised from the dust by the power of God. In virtue of Christ’s mediation, these bodies shall be revived and re-united to glorified spirits ; and in a countless retinue of redeemed ones in

heaven, throughout eternity shall be displayed "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

1. We may learn, in application of our subject, what place the redemption of man holds amidst the varied works of God. It is the last, the brightest and the best. It gives us the most distinct revelation of his disposition. It sets forth the Eternal One to our minds in forms of majesty and grace he nowhere else assumes. God is indeed observed in other departments of his works. His glory is written upon the spreading skies in characters of golden radiance. Yonder orbs floating in boundless space, by their numbers, their wonderful harmony, their unfading light, declare his glory, the firmament showeth his handiwork. So impressive an exhibition do they make, that from them the first, and perhaps the most excusable form of idolatry arose—Sabiism, or the worship of the Host of Heaven. The green earth, outstretching in our sight, sublime or beauteous in its scenery, yielding abundant treasures for our enjoyment, is an object of ineffable grandeur; and though under a curse for man's sake, speaks forth the praise of the Creator still. The living tribes that roam its surface, that float in air or sea in countless numbers, join the general chorus to Him whose hand hath made and fashioned all these things. Not a creature he has made, which does not attest the perfections of that Being who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working; and man, the noblest, most of all. Yet this is a tribute paid to him as the source of physical life and enjoyment. It regards not his moral glory, which evermore excels, and which appears pre-eminent in the person and work of Christ. Those forms of glory are to change and fade; this will survive and brighten through eternal years. The skies shall wax old, and the earth shall decay and die; and their divine characteristics will disappear so that no intelligent spectator will behold and adore. But the history of salvation by Christ will continue the grand subject of interest and attraction in heaven, as long as God and heaven shall last. Our enlarged minds will become more and more interested in its unfolding glories. We shall take in hand the ample volume of the Creator's works, and occupy our thoughts in scanning its wonders. And as we turn from page to page, it will be our high delight to see God in Christ; to read of redemption in its beginnings, its progress, its completion. We shall think how its influence spread with silent power over the face of the globe, to meliorate its rugged features, and bring back its rebellious inhabitants to God's sceptre and his love. We shall see the trophies of grace all around us. We shall hear, we shall join the song that shall roll through heaven's high arches: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Finally, we may deduce from our subject the proper topic

and the great end of the gospel ministry. It is to set forth "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Paul is speaking in the context of preachers of the gospel; and in so doing, furnishes one of the most impressive exhibitions of ministerial duty and responsibility to be found even in the writings of the apostle of the Gentiles himself. The same sentiments are elsewhere frequently brought into view. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses;"—this was the gospel according to Paul; and on this basis, to "beseech men to be reconciled unto God," this was his, and is our appropriate and special work. "God forbid," he exclaims, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are to preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; with such repetition of the wondrous theme, that the people shall not be allowed to lose it from their thoughts amidst the distracting cares and alluring pleasures of the world; and with such plainness and affection that they must understand its meaning and feel its force. Nor need we fear that the subject will become insipid, or that men's minds will weary of ministrations chiefly or wholly occupied with these matters. For besides the immense importance of the subjects themselves, which must ever make them interesting to sober and intelligent hearers, if only presented with evident sincerity and an ordinary share of address; there will be found within the lively oracles a copiousness and variety of matter, a fund of pertinent and beautiful illustrations, which the most original mind and glowing fancy can never exhaust. Experience, moreover, has abundantly proved that these truths, from their adaptation to our inward life and most urgent wants, will bear repetition so as no other subject of human interest or research will do, without satiety; and that those services are felt to be most in accordance with the great purposes of preaching, and that ministry is, in the end, most honored and most successful, which is made up mainly of a full, clear and faithful presentation of the elemental doctrines of the gospel. Intelligent worldly men quickly perceive that a minister mistakes his calling, who appears ever intent to escape beyond the limits of his commission into the regions of speculation or fancy; who seems to consider that some novel theory about Bible doctrine, some frost-work of fancy to amuse the imagination, cold as beautiful, will most interest his auditors and best subserve the ends of his ministry. His ministry, it may. But then he surely has other views than those Paul entertained; and the people are little likely to be nourished and built up on most holy faith by his lucubrations. No! brethren of the ministry, let us never forget that whatever might befit learned professors, or men of purely literary pursuits, it is our business to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified,—the less encumbered by theories and specula-

tions, the more simply and directly, the better. This has ever been the true glory of the gospel ministry ; this, in all ages, has given it all its respectability, its real vitality, and its moral power. When the gospel was almost lost amidst the rubbish of Papal superstition, a recurrence to the cardinal truths embraced in this phrase, and a soul-felt and soul-stirring enforcement of them, was the means, under God, of giving new life and power to his cause. This it was, which gave to Luther and Calvin and the rest of the Reformers their energy and their victory. They felt, when preaching Christ, that they had in hand an instrument neither beneath their power to employ, nor incongruous to the work of pulling down strongholds. These doctrines, plainly, earnestly preached, gave Whitfield that success, which else not all the magic of his surpassing eloquence would have obtained. The same system of truth made Edwards so mighty in word and in doctrine, and became the operating cause of the Great Awakening in his day ; it has been the means of rousing the slumbering energies of the Church to take hold on God's strength, when in any particular place he has been about to appear and build up Zion ; it has been the life and soul of all the genuine revivals of religion that have so often blessed our land. And, brethren, when we mourn, as now, the painful dearth of Divine influences in the Church, may we not believe that the cause, in part at least, lies here : that we have somewhat forsaken the old paths ;—that a muffling of the truth in soft phrases, or presenting it in grotesque methods, or a disposition in some measure to accommodate the gospel to the preconceptions of a philosophizing spirit, that it may be more acceptable to the prejudices of the carnal heart, has something to do with this result ? Is there not room, at least, for the inquiry ? And is there not reason why we should return to the methods which we know God has owned ; to a more simple and free and fearless declaration of those truths we know he has, in times past, so signally blessed ? To this new pastor, and the younger brethren present, the subject has a peculiar interest. For the character of their ministry as an evangelical ordinance and the success of their labors will doubtless depend upon their practice in regard to the subjects and the mode of their preaching. Let them, let us all strive to catch Paul's fervor on these high themes, to imitate his example in setting forth Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom of God." And then why may we not hope to see a day of revived zeal and orderly progress ? Why may not all these regions be vocal, as once, with the sounds of rejoicing and salvation ? Why may not the land bloom with the beauty and fertility of spring after the desolation of winter ? Why may we not hear from all parts of the earth, the shout that shall usher in a day of millennial glory, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people." Amen.

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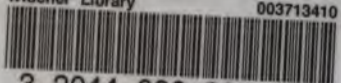
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